

Plateia

Call for papers

Plateia no. 7

**coordinated by Andreea Grigorovschi,
Alexandra Pignol-Mroczkowski and
Volker Ziegler**

**Revue annuelle
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Transition, ecologisation, or bifurcation?

Teaching, Thinking, and Acting in the Fields of Spatial Design in an Era of Global Limits

How can we define or redefine ecology today? In the Anthropocene era, available resources are becoming scarce, wild habitats are deteriorating, and biodiversity is declining. In a context marked by intellectual and political crises, as well as profound uncertainties about the future, our priorities and our ways of approaching the world must be redefined. It is in this context—where climate change is no longer a distant prospect to contemplate, but a concrete reality that is transforming the ways we inhabit the Earth—that we, as societies facing these transformations and, more specifically, as a community of architects, urban planners, landscape architects, and planners, must find tools to understand and come to terms with this new environment and learn to see beyond an anthropocentric perspective.

Environmental concerns are playing an increasingly prominent role in contemporary debates on urban planning (whether they concern urban spaces or rural areas), architecture, and the living environments of humans and non-humans. But what tools can we use to conceptualize, initiate, and support “ecological transitions” in concrete and spatial terms?

What vocabulary should we use to describe our relationships with nature and, more broadly, with all living things, as well as the forms of action that stem from them? In a world destined for accelerated obsolescence, the very vocabulary of ecology and transition seems to be in a state of constant flux, itself threatened by obsolescence: how, in the fields of spatial design, should we name these transformations today? Should we still speak of “ecological transition,” or should we prefer concepts such as “environmental resilience strategies” or even “transitional bifurcation”?

The tension between conceptual reformulation and the persistence of certain questions is also evident in the ways we think about inhabited territories. While the 1990s and 2000s attempted to define inhabited territories as a “widespread urban phenomenon,” labeling them *ville émergente* *Zwischenstadt*, “edge city,” *città diffusa*, etc., how are these concepts reinterpreted and conceptualized today in the

context of climate change—a world in transition where established knowledge and certainties are falling away? Recent studies seek to understand this world in crisis by reactivating certain modes of interpretation and action developed in the 1970s. In particular, they call for “re-inhabiting the earth,” re-examining the concept of the bioregion as a territorial paradigm, and respecting the “territories of the living.” What are the points of convergence between spatial and landscape design, territorial planning, ecology, and eco-poetics?

Beyond these lexical developments, the emergence and revival of concepts such as the “bioregion,” the “territories of the living,” the ecological commons, and even “more-than-human” spatialities point to a deeper renewal of the conceptual frameworks used to think about environmental transformations. What do these terminological and conceptual shifts reveal about the contemporary reconfigurations of the ways we think about and envision territory?

Perhaps we should first examine the terms we use in general, but also more specifically within the fields of spatial disciplines, in order to understand the reformulations, evolutions, and transformations of vocabulary that have taken place over the past few decades. The aim would thus be to sketch out, as a first step, an “archeology” of transitions, ecologisations, and bifurcations, enabling us to better grasp which strategies, forms of adaptation, and resilient attitudes may emerge from these inquiries. Such an archaeology also invites us to examine the modes of action and imaginaries of change that underpin contemporary discourses on ecology.

Does this mean, therefore, that we should engage in a process of continuous improvement in our responses to crises, as if the concept of ecological transitions were a matter of “infinite progress”? Should we engage in a state of constant “performativity” where every action is expected to produce measurable and visible results?

Or should we rather learn to slow down, to allow time for reflection, so that we better understand the concepts associated with this “ecological transition”? Are there not, on the contrary, recurring themes, forms of “stability,” or even “endurance,” in the issues and questions raised by the many relationships humans have with nature and, more broadly, with a “more-than-human” environment?

These questions cross theoretical, pedagogical, and project-based frameworks in the fields of spatial design, and challenge the tools used to guide and support contemporary transitions, ecologisations, and contemporary bifurcation points. To explore these issues, we suggest structuring our reflections around three main themes.

Themes:

1. The Formation and Distortion of Concepts

“Geography is nothing other than History in Space, just as History is Geography in Time.” (Élisée Reclus, epitaph, *L’Homme et la Terre*, Paris, Librairie universelle, 1905)

How can we conceptualize the cognitive and epistemological formations and distortions of notions related to transitions, ecologisations, and bifurcations? What shifts in meaning occur? What vocabulary should we use to discuss these phenomena, and how can we update it? Do certain notions become obsolete? How can we grasp the ecosystem of concepts in the process of change?

Theme 1 could include contributions that discuss, put into perspective, and contextualize vocabulary, systems of thought, the evolution of semantics, as well as disciplinary, cultural, local, and international interactions. It could also address these concepts and notions by taking a step back and offering a critical approach. In this era of “situated thought,” how can we offer cross-disciplinary and inclusive reflections? How can we adapt and translate concepts and notions drawn from diverse geographic, territorial, and cultural contexts?

2. Pathways and Reconfigurations in the Fields of Pedagogy or Education

“Any project in the territory should begin with [...] a refusal to allow the landscape to fragment into multiple ‘areas of action ’that are oblivious to one another.” (Michel Corajoud, “Le projet de paysage: lettre aux étudiants”, in: Jean-Luc Brisson [ed.], *Le jardinier, l’artiste et l’ingénieur*, Besançon, Éd. de l’Imprimeur, 2000, p. 44)

What about the teaching of transitions, ecologisations, and bifurcations in higher education institutions in Europe and abroad? How can these be defined and contextualized? What new forms of teaching exist at the intersection of research and practice? How can we identify central questions, as well as specific knowledge and skills? How can we envision new synergies in education? What methodologies should we develop?

Theme 2 proposes to examine the reconfigurations in the transmission of critical knowledge and practical skills. What approaches should be taken in the face of these societal and political challenges? Is it possible to reconcile technical approaches,

sensitivity to living systems, and shared governance? How do practical skills and spatial knowledge guide—or could guide and inform—territorial eco-politics?

3. Projections and prospectives

“[For radical environmentalism], it is the territory—which behaves almost like a person—that dictates what should be done—and, very often, what should not be done.” (André Corboz, *Le territoire comme palimpseste*, Besançon, Éd. de l’Imprimeur, 2001, p. 251)

How can we reconsider project-based approaches in terms of questions of transition, ecologisation, and bifurcation? How can we anticipate and plan in a context of systemic crisis? What methods and approaches to planning—how are our relationships to planning shifting? How can we deconstruct our ways of viewing planning and mobilize alternative tools to integrate the ethics of care and of “making do”? How can we approach foresight and planning timelines in the face of challenges to habitability? How can we relate ideas about risk, poetic interpretations, and alternative scenarios?

Theme 3 seeks to highlight recent experiences and evolving professional practices, both within local governments and within associative, “independent,” or interdisciplinary organizations (which combine research, design, and civic engagement, for example). How are professional practices and work processes evolving? In the context of ongoing uncertainty, what space is given to imagination and experimentation in prospective approaches? How can we discuss and communicate different possible futures?

About the journal and the coordinators of the thematic issue

Plateia, the annual journal of the École nationale supérieure d’architecture de Strasbourg, published by Presses universitaires de Strasbourg (<https://pus.unistra.fr/collection-revue/plateia/>), investigates the relationship between architectural practice and theory, the role of architecture in society, and developments in urban planning. Founded in 2020, it aims to serve as a forum for the convergence of architectural and urban research, the history of architecture and urban planning, sociology, anthropology, and geography. It emphasizes experimentation with innovative research methods, the exploration of new fields of study, and knowledge sharing.

Plateia’s editorial board evaluates articles on a double-blind peer review basis. This special issue is coordinated by:

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Associate Professors at ENSA Strasbourg and members of the AMUP Research Unit.

Submission guidelines

Two types of contributions are invited: “research articles” and “visual essays.” The journal accepts completed manuscripts only; proposals or abstracts submitted in advance will not be considered. Manuscripts may be submitted in French, English, or German. Articles written in English or German must be accompanied by an abstract in French.

Research articles should be 30,000–35,000 characters (including spaces), including the main text, notes, and references, but excluding the abstract. A maximum of 10 illustrations may be included.

Visual essays, which are based on a more substantial body of visual material (particularly for contributions to Themes 2 and 3), should be 20,000–25,000 characters (including spaces), including the main text, notes, and references, but excluding the abstract. A maximum of 20 illustrations may be included.

Instructions regarding citation style and manuscript preparation are provided in the document accompanying this call for papers (see “Notes for authors”).

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Manuscripts should be submitted to:

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Authors who are uncertain whether their contribution fits the scope of the issue are welcome to contact the coordinators.

Submission deadline: February 22, 2027.

Éléments de bibliographie indicative / Selected bibliography / Ausgewählte Literaturhinweise

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Notes for Authors Editorial guidelines

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